

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER  
LT. GOVERNOR

January 2, 2008

Stephen Johnson, Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N. W., Mail Code: 1101A  
Washington, DC 20460

Re: Libby Asbestos Site funding

Dear Administrator Johnson,

I am writing to urge EPA to budget for and fully fund the Libby Montana Asbestos Site cleanup. According to a January 24, 2007 article in the Washington Post, when the EPA declared Libby a Superfund site, it called the contamination "the most horrific environmental disaster in this country's history." Surely such a site needs to be EPA's top funding priority.

Libby has been in the cleanup phase for 7 years and it appears cleanup will take several more years at the current rate. Past efforts have been hampered by inadequate funding. Each year the initial request is eventually cut by several million dollars. Montana's Department of Environmental Quality has taken the lead for EPA in assessing the nearby town of Troy for asbestos. That effort began last year and the citizens were told that cleanup would begin in the summer of 2008. However, the department has recently been informed that funding will not be available to start cleanup activities. In fact, there may not even be sufficient funding finish the assessments.

In Libby, people are dying from exposure to asbestos. It's that simple. We don't need to do exhaustive studies or to spend millions more on modeling to see the effect asbestos has on people's lives. We need to clean up the community. The sooner the exposure is eliminated the sooner the people in Libby and Troy can get back to more normal lives.

Again, I ask that you take the necessary steps to ensure that the Libby/Troy site is fully funded in this and future years so that cleanup can be accomplished faster. People's lives hang in the balance, as would be expected for those living around "the most horrific environmental disaster in this country's history." Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Brian Schweitzer in black ink, followed by a stylized graphic element consisting of several horizontal lines of varying lengths.  
BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
Governor

cc: Richard Oppen